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16 November 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director- Comptroller

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Proposal for a Senior Seminar

1. A study recently undertaken in the Office of Training points to a need for a seminar for senior officers of this Agency - GS-15 and higher. I urge that consideration be given now to its establishment.

2. Much attention has been given to improving and broadening Agency training for junior and midcareer officers, with the general objectives of deepening their understanding of the intelligence profession as it operates in a world of growing complexity, and, in the Midcareer Course, helping to prepare them for higher responsibilities. These objectives deserve at least equal emphasis at the senior officer level. It should now be our aim to provide senior officers with the time and resources to review the status of the intelligence profession; to comprehend developing trends and necessities of which they may be only partially aware; to hear and discuss the most profound judgments available concerning foreign and domestic affairs, the relationships between them, and the potential impact of events upon intelligence as a major function of government. Most of all, we should provide those officers who are in the line of succession to senior managerial positions with an opportunity to address themselves in the most sophisticated fashion to the organizational and management problems which they will be inheriting.

3. Some of the factors underlying this recommendation are these:

a. That senior officers are interested in training opportunities for themselves is indicated by the number of competitors the Training Selection Board had to consider this year for the senior war colleges,

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the Senior Seminar of the Foreign Service, the Federal Executive Institute, the Harvard Business School, etc. I do not know how many applied, but their superiors nominated 58 of them for 26 places - more than twice as many as could be accepted, though all 58 were qualified for special recognition. This disparity is likely to grow. It is also notable that several of these courses last up to a year, so it is clear that senior officers can be spared for advanced training.

b. There is certainly a market for the kind of training mentioned in paragraph 2 above. The best single evidence is the Advanced Intelligence Seminar, whose three successful runnings so far have all been oversubscribed and have been repeatedly described in student critiques as "the best course I've ever had." Excellent outside speakers, student interest in domestic problems and the future, and free exchange of views among representatives of the four directorates have all encouraged us to develop further training along these lines. But that Seminar lasts only two weeks and the average grade of the students has been GS-14. Similar changes have also been welcomed in the Midcareer Course, the COS Seminar, and elsewhere, but we are not yet reaching the near-future managers of the Agency. The effort to reach them in the Midcareer Course has led to such a concentration of students in their middle and late 40's that I am recommending that the course be restricted (with few exceptions) to men and women in their 30's, and that older officers be entered in other courses including the one I am proposing here.

c. Meanwhile the kind of senior training in intelligence I propose is not available anywhere else. The senior war colleges and the Foreign Service's Senior Seminar give only the most peripheral attention to U.S. intelligence. The Federal Executive Institute is of necessity aimed primarily at personal growth and renewal, and cannot concentrate on the problems of a particular activity within government. Outside management courses have to generalize the problems of American business. All these are recognized as valuable experiences for the few senior CIA officers who can share them, but it ought to be possible to combine their best attributes of broad scope, depth of attention, sabbatical refreshment, and (not least) prestige into a course that focuses on CIA and its leadership of U.S. intelligence.

d. The Agency's fair success with problem-solving seminars suggests that the course I propose could serve that purpose as well. For example, the first running could have as its unifying theme a study and revision of that look at CIA's future which Lyman Kirkpatrick's task force wrote in 1965. How much have times changed since 1965, and why, and what further changes are in prospect?

e. A properly developed, rational program of career development training requires the establishment of this final, most sophisticated segment. This remains especially true so long as scores of senior CIA officers have had little or no training or experience in any intelligence function outside their own immediate jobs, and have only hazy or outdated notions of the work performed in other directorates and offices. Even those who have had the Midcareer Course (probably a number of years ago, if they are now in line of succession to top jobs) would benefit from a new and deeper look; they would be sharing their greater experience with a small number of other comers more usefully than was possible at midcareer.

f. The burden which training puts upon the topmost officers of the Agency is heavy, but I believe that much of it could most appropriately be devoted to those in the line of succession, while some of their customary appearances before more junior audiences could be handled by subordinates. One somewhat invidious reason for the prestige of the Midcareer Course is that in many cases the midcareerists have had more, or more recent, exposure to the top of the Agency than their own superiors have had. A senior course ought to strengthen the connection between the top men and their eventual successors, not just in their own directorates but throughout the Agency.

g. Finally, I am convinced we must devote more attention to the growing complexity and accelerated change in our situation both at home and abroad, and especially to their implications for the intelligence profession and the function of CIA. We should act on the suggestions made by [redacted] article, "The Agency and the Future," in Studies in Intelligence (Spring, 1970) - one of which was for an OTR seminar on the future.

4. Here, then, is what I propose: a seminar of three months' duration conducted twice a year, each for twenty officers of minimum grade GS-15. It would include a wide variety of speakers, the best we could find both inside and outside the Agency, but would also seek considerable variety of reading, some writing, much discussion, films, debates, student presentations, roundtables, and perhaps some domestic travel patterned after that of the Midcareer Course and the DD/S&T training program. Some of it would be fairly free-swinging, but the structured blocs would include the following:

a. CIA

Its relationship as an agency to the White House, Congress, and American society, plus its internal developments, prospects, and problems. For example, how have the successive Presidents, their advisers on foreign affairs, and the DCIs influenced its development?

b. Management/Planning

Something of the personal approach of the Federal Executive Institute; something from one of the good management programs that could supplement the Grid or planning courses the students may already have had; possibly an updated Brookings week of the kind that used to be included in the Midcareer Course. This segment would be tailored as closely as possible to CIA problems, not to management in the abstract.

c. The National Security Machinery

How the NSC and the special committees and groups work, now and prospectively; their impact on CIA and vice versa.

d. The Intelligence Community

A frank review of relations and problems, the impact of various types of collection and analysis upon one another, requirements, jurisdictions, responsibilities, successes and failures.

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e. The U.S. Domestic Scene

Aimed not only at the concerned citizen but especially at the professional intelligence officer who must be attuned to the relationship between domestic and national security affairs, and sensitive to the ways in which they coincide or conflict.

f. The U.S. and the World of the 1970s

The most penetrating assessment of future foreign relations and problems the guest speakers and student body can come up with. We would hope for some publishable writing.

g. The Impact of Science and Technology

A broad consideration of the societal consequences of technological developments, narrowing down to their profound consequences for intelligence.

h. Strategic Military Equations

A view or series of views by experts on nuclear relationships, SALT, deterrence, the role of war in modern society, the problems of military estimates.

5. That will do for openers, and I believe that with the necessary support from the rest of the Agency OTR can present such a course in the Fall of 1971. But once such a course is successfully under way I believe we ought to consider and plan for a second stage: turning the course into a National Senior Intelligence Seminar open to the upper levels of the whole intelligence community. It could become an important vehicle for CIA's exercise of leadership and influence over the whole intelligence process. For the senior officers who took it, it could come to have as great educational value and prestige as they now get from any other senior course in the government. We could plan for a course

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completely open to the community or alternatively for one part open and a later part reserved to CIA.

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[REDACTED]  
HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM  
Director of Training

15 DEC 1970

TO: Director of Training

1. The proposal outlined in paragraph 4 is approved. In preparing the seminar, the Director of Training should give careful attention to the constructive comments about the proposal which were made at the Deputies Meeting on 2 December 1970.

2. We shall defer a decision on whether this seminar will become a permanent part of our training program pending an evaluation of the first experience, and we shall of course reserve judgment on the second stage, as mentioned in paragraph 5.

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L. K. White  
Executive Director-Comptroller

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